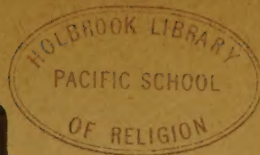


The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



No. 162

DECEMBER 2ND, 1942

DEAR MEMBER,

Food conditions in Europe have lain as a heavy burden on the hearts of many of us. Fresh information has come about the distribution of the very limited relief it has been possible to bring and about the urgency of the need.

FAMINE RELIEF IN GREECE

The Review of the International Red Cross gives a vivid picture of the happiness which has been brought to Greece by the relief sanctioned by our Government since last February, and distributed first by the International and now by the Swedish Red Cross :—

"*Issari, May, 1942.*—The miracle is achieved! The food sent by the Red Cross and brought by your representative was distributed on the same day. The village is saved, at least for a time. We have been awaiting news of its coming. At last we heard that flour and beans were on the way. The old town crier went out with his bell: 'To-morrow, Friday, everyone must be at the Church of St. Nicholas for food distribution.' At long last the day of resurrection dawned. The human stream flowed towards the church—men, women and children carrying sacks and baskets. About ten o'clock a feeble but excited voice cries: 'Here they are!' Immediately all the 'skeletons' are on their feet. Hands automatically make the sign of the cross. The truck rumbles up, and people get out of it. The president of the commune makes a speech, and then the distribution begins and goes on till six o'clock in the evening. Next day all the baking ovens in the village are alight, and with their smoke the prayers of all who have been saved from certain death rise to heaven."

The greater part of the population of the larger towns now gets five ounces of bread per person daily and there is daily soup for five hundred thousand. The almost insurmountable difficulties of transportation delayed distribution in the provinces; but there are already 105 kitchens in operation, and in February and March 3,300 tons of wheat and 375 tons of maize flour were distributed in the provinces. In Athens the Patriotic Institute of Social Welfare has doubled its number of child welfare centres, appointed twenty-one new visiting nurses and tripled its ante-natal clinics. Nursery schools, which have been greatly increased, give out five thousand portions of soup daily. About seven hundred children have been sent to the country, and "it is to the honour of the Greek peasants that they accept these poor children with cordiality and kindness, and share their food with them with an altruism worthy of all praise." In Athens and Piraeus alone 60,000 meals are provided daily in the schools.

In spite of this, the death rate in August was still rising among children. Fats, without which health cannot be maintained, are almost impossible to procure. The American Red Cross has given sixty-five tons of powdered milk, and our Government has allowed a hundred tons of powdered milk to go to Greece from Canada each month, paid for by the Greek Government.

CONDITIONS IN BELGIUM

The Swedish Relief Committee for the children of Belgium has collected 300,000 Swedish crowns for its Queen Astrid Fund, and a further 100,000 crowns was raised by the clergy who held memorial services for the Belgian Queen. Between one and two

thousand Swedish families offered to give homes to Belgian children. Four hundred and fifty children were selected. When everything was ready, even to parcels of food for the journey, the German authorities postponed the arrangements. The alternative was to attempt to feed Belgian children in their own country, and certain goods, bought by Swedish firms in Hungary, were purchased by the Swedish committee and diverted to Belgium. Considerable quantities of clothes were made in Sweden and sent to Belgium. The Swedish committee working in Belgium reports:—

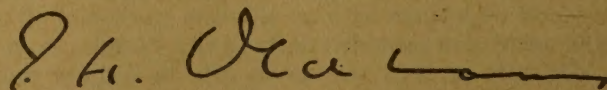
“The conditions in Belgium are appalling. As the war goes on the state of health gets worse day by day. It is quite incredible how it is possible for people to exist on the diminishing rations. The mortality among the children is alarming. Before selecting the children for the journey to Sweden they were medically examined, and of these 450 children 347 were anaemic, 236 were under-nourished, and others were suffering from glands and were feeble without any special definite illness. It must be remembered that these children were selected from among such as were considered well enough still to be able to benefit by a stay in Sweden . . . The funds of the committee are now nearly exhausted and it is very hard to collect any more money in Sweden.”

All the help that can be given by neutrals has already been given and it is distressing that our country has no part in it. What is being done reaches only a minority of the children whose health, and even survival, is threatened. The Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hinsley have presented a memorandum to the Government on behalf of the Famine Relief Committee, containing a detailed statement of the quantities of dried milk and vitamin capsules which would save the children and nursing mothers of Greece and Belgium, and asking that navicerts be granted to have them sent.

THE CRISIS OF LAW AND JUSTICE

Many people in this country still take it as a matter of course that, though there may be considerable, even far-reaching, social changes, there will be no radical difference between life before and after the war. They have as yet no inkling of the fundamental nature of the crisis in which our society is involved. The Supplement this week shows the extent to which the very foundations of justice and law have been undermined. The system of justice may continue to impress us by its stability and show no outward signs of decay; but if the beliefs which are its ultimate support dissolve, sooner or later the edifice will crumble. The Supplement makes plain the significance of what has happened on the Continent and shows how justice inevitably withers when cut off from its religious root. The writer, who is still in the early forties, has been lecturer and professor of Law in three German universities. He came to this country in 1938 and has been engaged in research work at Oxford in connection with the World Council of Churches and Magdalen College. He has just published a volume, *Christianity, Politics and Power*, in the C.N.-L. Books Series. We greatly welcome this contribution by a continental scholar, because the crisis concerns the whole of Western society, and those who have had experience of it in its most acute manifestations have much to teach us.

Yours sincerely,



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